:: Bowen-Jones et al. K-5 (1955-1958) 1961
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433 458 The main relevant conclusion was unmistakably ominous: 'Government expenditure has more than made up for that of the Knights, and has diverted more of the labour of the population to the service, direct or indirect, of the foreign government which applied it to purposes entirely Imperial and unconnected with the special interests of the colony. Doubtless this expenditure has led to immediate prosperity... but the basis of this prosperity is artificial and precarious' (6). It is possible to argue the degree of validity of the third premiss of the first clause but the general truth is undeniable. This general picture is so clear that in this particular chapter attention will be focussed only on some aspects of the Maltese economy as it has developed during the last 50 years.

43 The changing character of Maltese Trade is well evidenced in the annual reports of the Customs and Port Department. Before World War I, Malta was still of some importance in Mediterranean transit trade, partfcularly for goods destined for North African and Levant ports. Between 1910 and 1922 the annual average weight of such merchandise handled was 17,000 tons (7). This activity almost disappeared during hostilities and after a short post-war boom settled down at a new low level handling only some 3,000 tons of merchandise. In part this was due to the elimination of the important German and Austrian connection which, in a Report published in 1919 (8), was the subject of much hostile Maltese comment. More important was the fact that the gap thus left was not filled by other foreign or local interests. The Maltese writers of the 1919 Report were not able to obtain their desire 'to have a company formed by a few merchants, who would thus teach Maltese capitalists that the investment of moneys in industries and especially in shipping is more profitable and better for the Islands and for the capitalists themselves, than the investment in doubtful securities or in reckless speculation'. The fundamental difficulties of expanding port [504] activity have remained. Malta, for all the grandiloquence of the name 'Grand Harbour', has until very recently possessed but poor physical facilities for handling shipping. All vessels of over 2,000 tons have had to be worked by lighter, and civil repair facilities as well as warehousing have been extremely limited. In that the needs of the Fleet have been paramount this is understandable; the consequences have been deplorable. The absence of enthusiasm for [454] local investment of Maltese capital has been equally inhibiting. There survives, even intensified during the 1930's, a traditional feeling of insecurity which was succinctly noted by a banker giving evidence before the 1911 Commission: 'There is plenty of money in the Island... there is not much trust, I think' (9). Even now, while the rate of saving in Malta is very high - c. 14 per cent. of total personal income, too large a proportion of the savings are invested abroad - some £70 millions. Given this basic insecurity, which still appears in conversations with business men and which is so deeply rooted as to be very difficult to remove, development is difficult. Moreover, since the Maltese for an island [208] people are singularly non-maritime in character, and, in conditions no more difficult than in many other parts of the Mediterranean, have almost ignored the fishery industry (10), there exists no traditional basis for marine affairs. In these circumstances the value of the handing over of the Naval base to British civilian firms, and the policy of attracting foreign (mainly British) manufacturing concerns, thus making available both facilities and most of the capital, is on economic grounds indisputable.

439 457 One other aspect of port and trading activities must be examined, the nature and balance of imports and exports. The changing character of world trade in the first place has vitally affected the nature of Malta's entrepôt activity. By 1956, the value of re-exports had reached over two and a half million pounds, of which one and a half million represented mineral fuels and lubricants, mainly aviation spirit and turbine fuel (11). This is still the pattern today. Of Malta's transit trade in re-exports, by far the biggest proportion is concerned with supplying the Garrison in its new and more mobile form. The imbalance between retained imports and domestic exports remains essentially similar to that observed very much earlier and is best examined in conjunction with other economic elements.

1: Bowen-Jones et al. K-5 (1955-1958) 1961
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economic structure due to a British policy which in the past was almost entirely based on her own military needs constitutes an unanswerable case for adequate help to the Islands in their present effort ' find alternative sources of employment'. From the factual point of view this last statement needs qualification, while in so far as it is representative in a mild way of an attitude which more violently would throw the whole onus of guaranteeing the future on to Britain it is dangerous. In the first place, as the various studies in this book indicate, Maltese economic dependence on the value placed on the islands by non-Maltese communities, necessarily in the light of their own needs, is of great antiquity. The only way in which Britain could have refrained from increasing this dependence would have been by positively encouraging social and economic stagnation outside a small Garrison pale. This leads to the second point that the indigenous population rapidly seized opportunities to rise above the low level of life possible on local non-locational resources. The development of the present economy is as much due to natural indigenous economic desires as to outside pressure. Thirdly, as noted in the Introduction, recent confusion of attitudes towards political subordination and social welfare as well as to production, has produced a general realisation of the problem, without producing any clear solutions. Indeed the implications of the suggested solutions have been met with natural but rather irrational repugnance. Finally, we may observe that the use of phrases such as 'alternative sources of employment' when what is really meant is 'alternative sources of wealth', must always darken counsel. Once again the need for realistic appraisal of natural resources becomes manifest.

The most up-to-date picture of the Islands' general economy may be derived from the 1958 Departmental reports published late in 1959 and 1960. In December 1958 the total population numbered almost 324,000, that of Malta having increased by 5 per cent. since 1948 in spite of emigration while that of Gozo declined by 0.4 per cent. as a result of emigration. The internal shifts of population that occurred during and after World War II have virtually ceased. The gainfully occupied population totalled 88,710, and less than 5 per cent. of the total male population aged 14-64 were not productively occupied. 25.4 per cent. of male workers were Government employees and paid out of Government revenue. 33.5 per cent. of the employed population worked in or for the Service Departments, deriving their income directly or indirectly from the Imperial Government. Thus, only 42 per cent. of the working population is employed in normal civilian activity and, as already noted, most of this activity is generated by indirect Imperial expenditure. In 1958 the gross national product had increased to £42.4 millions but the visible trade deficit also rose to £25.2 millions.

To conclude this section we turn by way of illustration from the general to the particular, to a brief consideration of two of the facets of Maltese life investigated by our team of research workers.

Her Majesty's Dockyard in Malta, for so long the crux of British interest in the Islands, has recently been transferred to civilian interests amidst a welter of differing reactions. Thanks to the co-operation of the Admiral Superintendent and his staff in March 1957 we have been able to analyse the main characteristics of the Dockyard, and present here a few of the relevant findings. At that time, 12,572 Maltese workers were directly employed in the Dockyard, almost exactly the same number as the total of farmholders, or the total engaged in 'industrial' occupations, i.e. mining, quarrying, manufacturing and construction. In the Dockyard there were four departments, those of the Captain, Construction, Engineering, and Electrical Engineering, which were regarded as 'professional departments'. These employed 59 per cent. of the total Dockyard employees, most of this proportion in skilled trades. In the remaining 11 departments, a considerable number of technicians and craftsmen were also employed as well as upper-grade administrative and financial personnel. The Dockyard thus contained the largest pool of skilled labour in the Islands and provided the most important training ground, because, of the roughly equal numbers in civil 'industrial' employment, a very much larger proportion was unskilled, particularly in the building industry (18).

1: Bowen-Jones et al. K-5 (1955-1958) 1961
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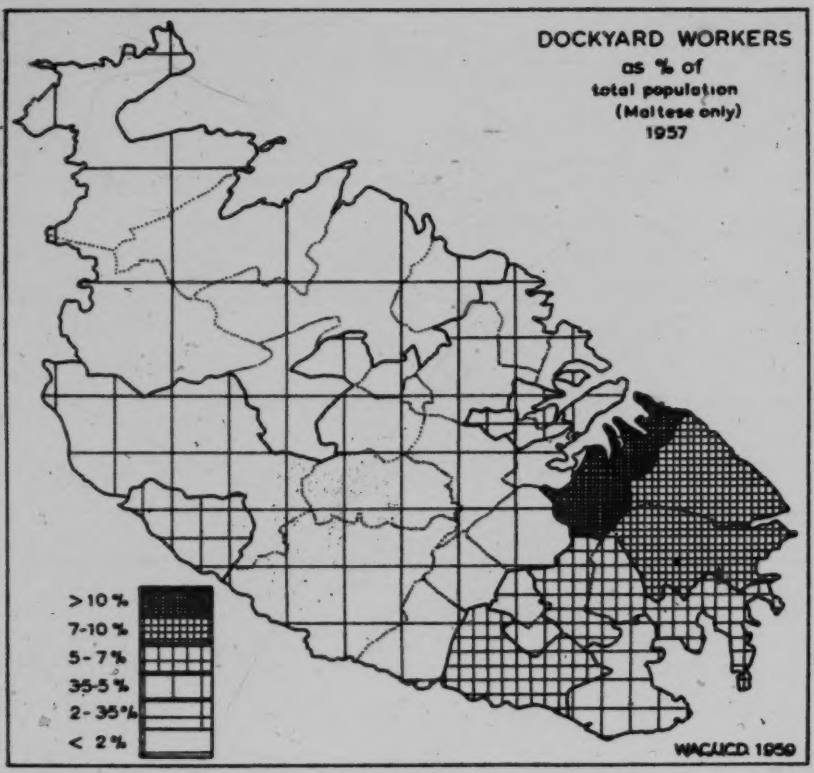

Fig. 64 Dockyard Workers as % age of Total Population.

[p. 172-A]

1: Bowen-Jones et al. K-5 (1955-1958) 1961
EZ6 Malta EZ6
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Fig. 64 shows the distribution in Malta of Maltese Dockyard workers by residence as a proportion of the total regional populations. The zones of concentration are centred on the Three Cities, and the great importance of Dockyard employment in the North-East as a whole, a phenomenon more than a century old (19), is clear. Particularly noteworthy in this context is the much smaller association of Dockyard employment with the belt of urban settlement which stretches from Valletta westwards to Lija. Conversely, the northern third of the Island, most recently settled and still relatively sparsely populated, has very little indeed to do with Grand Harbour. Gozo, still more remote, had but 25 Dockyard workers. Some 417 English workers were employed in the Dockyard most of them living in the suburban residential areas west of Valletta, 75 per cent. in contiguous Sliema, St. Julians and Gżira.

[994]

Thus we see the one part of the climax of that change in Malta which, commencing in the sixteenth century, swung the economic centre of gravity from the Centre to the North-East. During the last century the new conurbation extended its grip on the rest of the Island. Police Traffic Records (20) show part of this effect; on the 5th February, 1958, a normal day, 28 special buses, in addition to public transport, carried 930 Dockyard employees to work from a zone extending to Birżebbuġa, Żurrieq, Siġġiewi, Dingli, Rabat, Mosta and north-eastwards to St. Julians.

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Here we have reason and space only for the briefest of notes on current economic conditions. For more complete statements the reader is referred to the recent publications of the Maltese Department of Trade and Industry. As a result of Britain's reappraisal of her strategic needs, the old Naval Dockyard was handed over to a civilian firm by April 1959. Some emotional reaction has

1: Bowen-Jones et al. K-5 (1955-1958) 1961
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rather obscured the simultaneous mounting of a five-year Economic Development Plan. This is aimed at the establishment of manufacturing industries and envisages the expenditure of over £32,000,000, the bulk of which is to be contributed by the United Kingdom. Internal Legislation under the Aids to Industries Ordinance XXI of 1959 offers attractive terms to immigrant and local enterprises. At Marsa, an Industrial Estate is rapidly being built, public utilities are being extended and facilities for technical and craft training improved. Completion is expected in 1961 of the first commercial deep-water quays, complete with storage and handling facilities. Several British business interests have already responded to these new attractions. 185 504

However, the fundamental characteristics of the Maltese economy and society remain, and the whole complex of resources, appraisal of resources and social needs and demands must be appreciated before effective forces of change will appear.

As a last short study we turn to the development of communications and public transport in the Maltese Islands, which is of significance for two main reasons. First, in the pattern that has appeared we can see the interplay of all those forces, Imperial and indigenous, which have affected Maltese life. Secondly, although the Islands are small, distance and remoteness are everywhere measured mentally as well as physically, and the impact of modern transport has revolutionised Maltese life. The road pattern in Malta is complex and generally ancient (Fig. 68). It is impossible to categorise past and present roads sufficiently precisely to show cartographically the changes that have taken place and description must necessarily be brief. As shown in Worsley's survey of 1824 (21), the main alignments were then concentrated in the central region. Away from the grid-plan streets of Valletta and the less geometrical Three Cities (22), cart and carriage roads ran out to the main casals (within the zone referred to above as now served by Dockyard special buses) and inter-connected most of the rural centres. That part of the island north of the Victoria Lines was poorly served. In Gozo, country tracks connected the villages with the inland capital of Rabat which in turn had a carriage road to the port of Migarr. 491

By 1911 (23) traffic had increased considerably, particularly within a four-mile radius of Valletta, and the Royal Commissioners of that year ventured to question on financial grounds the need for maintaining the very large mileage of the dense central and eastern network of roads, most of which as the result of long customary use and evolution were of equal status although often strictly unnecessary. The northern and southern coastlands were still served only by a few 'feeder lines' from interior settlements, but with the bridging of the Isperanza gorge at Mosta, that town had become a route focus for the whole of the northern territory and henceforward began to rival Rabat. Military needs had resulted in improvements being made to some roads but, more important still, had called into being in 1881 a railway running from Valletta to Rabat, and later extended expensively to the camp and hospital at Mtarfa. By 1911 the operating loss had become so great as to warrant special inquiry by the Commission. The failure was due partly to the fact that the system had not been designed on commercial lines, partly because the total demand for transport was still relatively small in the areas served, but mainly because a railway service could not be flexible enough to meet the particular demand that did exist. In 1905 a tramway system, less open to objection on all these grounds, was opened. First the area between Valletta, Marsa and Hamrun was served, and later lines were built to Zebbug. Designed for passenger rather than freight carrying, the tramways assisted in the extension of urban influence into the country. Then as now, however, that indented coastal configuration to which Malta owes her natural harbours, and around which resides the majority of the island's population, made land communication in the conurbation area tortuous and lengthy. Innumerable ferries and the *dghajjes* boats in Marsamxett and Grand Harbour offered more convenient carriage. 496 [505]

During and after World War I, motor vehicles made their appearance and the railroad and tramways rapidly disappeared leaving as sole traces of their 494

[See P. 184- Add Analyst]

1: Bowen-Jones et al. K-5 (1955-1958) 1961
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Gozo

confused and seldom bears any simple relation to topography. In this region, many minor factors of soil, aspect and water supply produce local variations in the landscape, human as well as physical (Fig. 129 A, B and C). 241* 311*

Around the village of Qala, the upland is generally poorly cultivated. Fields of cereals and sulla are interspersed with abandoned areas and karst patches. On the Qala coastlands to the east the pattern of cultivation is clearly related to the successive outcropping of the various rock formations which are here, in contrast to the rest of the region, quite simply arranged (Fig. 129 D and E). The whole sequence from Upper Coralline to Lower is displayed in this district but there are few well marked breaks of slope, the whole forming a single slope from 400 feet to sea level. Immediately below the Upper Coralline summits, vines and fruit trees occur on the Blue Clay. Nearer the sea, a band of Globigerina is largely under cereals, sulla and legumes, this being succeeded by Lower Coralline wasteland fringing the coast.

The complex structure of the lands to the south of Qala is reflected in broken topography and a great variety of outcrop. South facing valleys in which the Blue Clay is exposed give way on their seaward side to a fragmentary platform developed on Globigerina and Lower Coralline limestones. The distribution of wasteland is closely associated with the outcrops of the latter formation. With the exception of the upper Wied tal-Qala (58), where good, well watered soils carry fruit, this district is one in which small enclosures of the whole dry crop assemblage lie among rocky hill wastes. Standards of cultivation in this somewhat inaccessible part of the island are generally low and abandonment is proceeding. By contrast, the slopes above Mgarr Bay, extending eastwards to include ta'Zewwieqa (60) are, on the whole, more intensively worked. In this steeply sloping area, unusually small enclosures have been established for the cultivation of fruit and tomatoes, while somewhat larger fields carry cereals and sulla. These patches of cultivation alternate with barren scree slopes. In the immediate vicinity of Mgarr (61), ill-tended minor tree crops such as carobs, figs and olives give a spurious impression of luxuriance. Mgarr itself is a fishing harbour and commercial port. In its latter capacity it belongs to Gozo as a whole rather to its immediate hinterland and through it passes all the trade between the two islands. Port facilities are limited and have acted as a brake on the commercial development of Gozo. Mgarr has little or no agricultural function and is overshadowed in size by its immediate neighbour, the farming village of Ghajnsielem. South of Mgarr, below Fort Chambray, the Rdum it-Tafal (62) is a typical Gozitan undercliff area with small enclosures, all rather ill developed, which carry some tomatoes, potatoes and fruit crops, among which there are numerous islands of rocky, carob-clad wasteland. [504]

V. THE SOUTHERN REGION (Fig. 130)

The only unity possessed by this region is a result of its structural and topographical separation from the interior. The il-Hobz Coastlands (63) lie below a well-marked Upper Coralline scarp and are separated by the Wied Mgarr ix-Xini (64) from the Sannat and ta'Cenc Uplands (67 and 66). The latter are an upthrown block of Globigerina and Lower Coralline Limestone, the northern edge of which is a clearly defined, interior-facing fault-line scarp. In the extreme west, the sharp incision of the Wied ix-Xiendi (70) divides the Southern Region from the Globigerina platforms of the west. [133]

At il-Hobz (63) the karst edge of a low Upper Coralline cliff overlooks gentle slopes developed on Blue Clay and Globigerina. A narrow belt of spring-line fruit growing is succeeded downhill by open terraces and larger fields of cereals, sulla and other 'dry' crops. Much of the land is spring-tilled in preparation for summer vegetables. The seaward limit of these shelving slopes is marked by a break of slope below which lies a low Globigerina rock platform.

This simplicity of landform is abruptly terminated on the west by the fault-guided incision of the Wied Mgarr ix-Xini (64). Below the pumping station, steep slopes and exposure of the compact Lower Coralline beds have prevented cultivation. Coinciding with an upthrown block of the same rock type, wasteland extends into the lower Wied Hankira and over the neighbouring, gentle slopes.

[TEXT CONTINUES ON P. 283]

175 century but went into decline early in the nineteenth, par-
288 ticularly after the Spanish Government prohibited all imports
464 of yarn (1800). But the industry was slow to die and is today undergoing something of a re-birth under a protective monopoly[5]. Cotton provided, during the nineteenth century, much employment, particularly for women who, in 1861, amounted to 96% of all cotton workers (B/167 - 1861). The small male labour force was mainly engaged in the beating and dyeing departments of the industry. This industry moreover, was centred in the villages and was essentially a home craft, so that the worker in cotton was never very far removed from home or farm, and field work was an alternative when cotton production declined. This decline accelerated towards the close of the nineteenth century but was not spread at an even rate over the whole of the rural area of the Islands. The total decline was due to external economic factors but, within the Islands themselves, the industry survived longest in its traditional 'core area' of Rabat and Żebbuġ. "The cotton industry persisted where the skills were greatest - where it now exists as a craft industry" (B/381).

175 However the harbour areas and the dockyard were providing
178 work and opportunity on an increasing scale towards the end
241 of the nineteenth century and during the first quarter of
369 this[6]. "The population nearest the harbour profited first,
464 and there was a spreading outwards, as more and more of the
[288] Island sought work in the port. As the attraction of the
[396] harbour area spread, so interest in the declining cotton
[504] industry decreased". (B/381) A new alternative was thus appearing and one very different in that it meant a greater break with home, farm and village than had been the case with cotton. Agriculture itself came to feel the impact of the alternatives. "Gradually the whole Island became drawn into the economic sphere of the harbour area, and the population of the rural area became less and less dependent on agriculture for its livelihood" (B/381). This is a key factor in
178 an understanding of rural Malta and Gozo today. The second,
241 considered later in more detail, is the social change which
369 has been brought about by the emancipation of the villager
241 through direct and indirect education and contact with the
433 people and ideas of the world outside. Together these two forces, the one an extension and magnification of what had happened before on a temporary basis and the other a consequence of the trend towards social enlightenment which has been a widespread feature of the twentieth-century world, have given the farmer an escape. On the economic level he has the new range of employment opportunities indicated, while his newly acquired literacy and education is making it

178 possible for the young countryman to follow his economic
241 shift from country to town with a social transplanting out
369 of the close-knit community of the rural village to the
241 cosmopolitan levels of life in the towns.

Along with the increase of employment in the dockyard
433 and harbour there has been a relative decline in agriculture
178 in that an increase in the total numbers of the farming
464 community was accompanied by a shrinking of the agricultural
396 sector within the total gainfully occupied population of the
433 Islands. The Dockyard has grown to become the largest single
● 504 concern and, in March 1957[7], gave employment to 12,572 Maltese
369 workers (plus a further 417 United Kingdom nationals). The percentage of Dockyard employees in individual districts may be taken as a second possible criterion of 'rurality'. Appendix 2.A, showing Dockyard workers in March,1957, expressed as a percentage of the employed population, reveals the heaviest concentration round the yards themselves (the Three Cities) and in the Żejtun, Żabbar, Pawla and Kalkara areas of south-eastern Malta. The whole of Gozo supplied only twenty-five workers at that time - this being the same figure as for Santa Vennera, near Hamrun. Nevertheless it is significant that no part of Malta is unrepresented in the Dockyard (Map 4).

464 The workers listed in Appendix 2.A are only a part of
36 those employed in the harbour area and the towns and it is to this group that one refers when speaking of the 'draw' of the harbour area and its associated manufacturing and service industries. These include transport of various kinds, shops, cafés and bars, workshops, offices and all manner of public utilities and services.

361 It is clear that in a definition of 'rurality' the
369 occupational structure, whether considered from a farming or
162 dockyard point of view, is not the sole criterion though the most convenient. One might take, for example, the extent to which each census district is built-over. The 1957 census distinguishes 'township' areas within each district (Appendix 3). The township-dwelling population accounts, as one would expect, for nearly 100% of the total in the Urban zone, but even in the rural districts most people are seen to live within the villages rather than in isolated farmsteads. In terms of area on the other hand the contrast between urban and rural zones is marked. In all three rural zones only five districts show a built-up township area accounting for more than 10% of the total. Richardson considers this nucleated-dispersed aspect of settlement distribution for 1948 and 1931 and notes significant changes in the pattern (R/561).

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
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64 Government the Maltese people would be represented, if
666 they so decided in a General Election, by three Members at
Westminster. They would keep their own Legislative
668 Assembly with an enhanced measure of autonomy since a single Maltese Government would take the place of the existing Diarchy; only a reduced number of matters, mainly concerned with foreign affairs and defence, would remain the exclusive responsibility of the Parliament and Government
[651] of the United Kingdom. The Maltese Government would retain responsibility for taxation in Malta until such time as the Maltese economy was held to have reached a level comparable with that of the United Kingdom.

642 Meanwhile discussions between Her Majesty's Govern-
ment and Mr Mintoff's Administration continued with
648 fluctuating fortunes on the constitutional, economic and
668 financial aspects of the Integration policy. Here the perennial
464 difficulty remained: the conception of "economic equivalence" which Mr Mintoff had been holding out to his supporters as the indispensable accompaniment of Integration and sought to impose on Her Majesty's Government. Negotiations were heading towards a deadlock when in April 1957 a new element of difficulty was injected into the situation by the visit to Malta of the British Minister of Defence. Mr Sandys's announcement that the changes in
• [504] British Defence policy and their consequential cuts in Defence expenditure would affect the Dockyard, Malta's greatest single employer of labour, created serious anxiety despite the reassurance in the Minister's statement that in any future war Malta would no longer be, as she had been in the last one, "in the very centre of the European battle area."

464 The anxiety was real, widespread and justified, for over
668 13,000 Maltese are in regular employment in the Dockyard
504 out of a national working population of just under 83,000 and are the wage-earners for a very considerable proportion of the total population. The Dockyard has always been, in Mr Lennox-Boyd's phrase, "the industrial

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

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SENGLEA FROM THE VALETTA SIDE OF THE GRAND HARBOUR
[*See pp.* 55, 69.]

THE THREE CITIES AND PART OF THE DOCKYARD, LOOKING TOWARDS VALETTA
In between, Vittoriosa and Fort S. Angelo.
[*See pp.* 47, 240–41, 249 *and* 250.]

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[facing p. 240]

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

504 464 668 [793] 668 648

core of Malta." The average Dockyard hand did not know if his job might not come to an end by the end of the year; and representatives of all classes in the country, including the parish priests, passed resolutions pressing for a guarantee of alternative employment if the Dockyard were to close down.

In the following month the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Mr Lennox-Boyd, put forward a new proposal to avert the threatened deadlock. While adhering to the Integration policy, and to "equivalence" of the Maltese economy and standard of living as an ultimate aim, he proposed an experimental period or trial run of five years for the Maltese economy to approximate itself to that of the United Kingdom. During this period the British Government would afford economic assistance towards the attainment of this object, consisting of a grant of £25,000,000 over the five years; assistance with educational, health and other social services based on a percentage of what the Maltese were able to do for themselves; and an obligation to help if unemployment rose above the British level in consequence of Defence cuts. Meanwhile Maltese representation at Westminster would remain in abeyance.

Even so, Mr Mintoff was not satisfied. On the 14th December he tendered his resignation owing to a difference of opinion with a section of his supporters in the General Workers' Union but withdrew it three days later; and he then raised the cry of independence as the alternative if he failed to obtain Integration on his own financial terms. The Nationalist Opposition, which had combated Integration, proved ready to support the converse alternative, for on the 30th December 1957 their representatives in the Legislative Assembly voted for Mr Mintoff's Resolution threatening severance of the link with Britain, which was passed unanimously and with acclamation in the following terms:

> That, as the British Government is not prepared to honour the obligation assumed by that Government, in the declaration